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1880 Box 3

IN COMMEMORATION

OF THE VISIT

OF THE

Sovereign Grand Lodge,

INDEPENDENT ORDER

OF ODDFELLOWS,

AND THEIR GUESTS,

TO

PENETANGUISHENE

Saturday, Sep. 18, 1880.

BARRIE:

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1880.

Penetanguishene.

THE HURONS AND THE JESUITS.

In the days gone by when Canada was yet a desolation of forests, this portion of the County of Simcoe boasted of populous towns, rude fortifications and a large extent of tilled ground. But two hundred years and more have passed since the last of the then lords of the soil vanished from this their stronghold ; and all that is left are the relics of a lost people. The forest has again grown over the spot on which stood the wigwams, and where the harvests of maize waved in the summer breeze ; but once in a while a mass of closely packed skeletons and disjointed bones are unearthed by the farmer's plough. These, with the kettles, weapons and trinkets, intermingled with them in these vast graves, are the only memorials of the nation, who gave their name to our grand lake " The Huron."

On the Western and Southern banks of Penetanguishene Bay were two of the villages of the Huron nation, who in the small area comprised in the Peninsula lying between Nottawasaga Bay and Lake Simcoe, had in 1639, thirty-two villages with seven hundred dwellings ; four thousand families, and a total population of about twenty-five thousand.

One of these villages WENRIO, lay near the foot of the hill at the South-West corner of the Bay ; the other IHONATIRIA, back of that part of the present harbour called the *North-West Basin*, almost immediately opposite the Provincial Reformatory.

In 1613 the great Champlain had pierced his way through from Quebec to our waters. The route taken by him was up the River Ottawa, thence across Lake Nipissing down the French River and along the shores of Georgian Bay, here. And with the hope of spreading the seeds of their Faith amongst the Huron Tribes, Briebeuf, Daniel and Davost, three of the Jesuit Fathers, were in 1634 sent as the first missionaries from the French Establishment at Quebec. After a voyage, in which they endured the most terrible hardships, the Fathers landed on the shores of Thunder Bay, a few miles from here, and from thence proceeded on foot to the Village of IHONATIRIA on the borders of our harbour.

From that time all the hopes of the Jesuits in France and Canada were centered in this section of the country. To Civilize and Christianize a race like the Hurons, who, instead of being of migratory habits like the generality of the Indian tribes, would have formed a permanent and abiding nucleus from which their Faith would have spread amongst the other tribes of North America, (apart from the political help it would have been towards the forming of the "New France" on this continent) was a task worthy of their enthusiasm, and one to which these devoted missionaries and their successors, lent themselves with a heroism and courage almost without parallel. But disease, famine and the cruel and relentless wars with the Iroquois, were all against them ; and after leading a martyr's life, most of them died a martyr's death. In 1649 the Hurons were almost exterminated by the Iroquois, and from that time, the small remnant, scourged by famine and disgrace, were persistently harassed by their enemy ; until in despair the few survivors of a once powerful nation, fled the country and sought refuge at Quebec.

PENETANGUISHENE

As a Port and Military Station.

About the same date as the birth of Toronto, Governor Simcoe, for mercantile purposes, determined on connecting Lakes Ontario and Huron by as direct a route as possible. For that purpose the Governor had visited Lake Huron, and discovering the harbour of Penetanguishene to be fit for shipping, Yonge Street was opened to Holland River, and communication established by two routes from that point to Penetanguishene. By this means the circuitous route by Lake Erie was avoided. The Gazetteer of 1799 refers to our harbour as "a very excellent harbour."

The Penetanguishene Road, completing the direct road to Toronto, was not however built until 1847.

The date of the first military or naval settlement at Penetanguishene, seems very hard to be got at, as no authentic records appear to have been kept. In 1827 John Galt was here, and refers to the place at that time as "the Military Station and Dock Yard of Penetanguishene." Again he says, "we reached Penetanguishene, the remotest and most inland dock yard that owns obedience to the meteor flag, of England "whereby orders of the Admiralty, His Majesty's gun-boat, "the *Bee*, was placed at my disposal."

There are four gun-boats sunk in the harbor of Penetanguishene, which were sunk here some time after the American War and before 1828.

In 1828 the British Post was removed from Drummond's Island to Penetanguishene, on the former place being given up to the Americans. The British detachments stationed on Drummond's Island, were parts of the 71st, 79th, 24th and 15th Regiments. In 1828 there was also a detachment of marines under Lieut. Woodin, R.N., at Penetanguishene.

In 1832 the first great reduction of the naval and military establishment at Penetanguishene took place. Amongst the articles advertised to be sold by the Crown, by Public Auction at Penetanguishene, on the 15th of March, 1832, were: *The Tecumseth*, Schooner, 175 tons; *The Newash*, Brigantine, 175 tons; *The Bee*, Gun-boat, 41 tons; *The Mosquito*, Gun-boat, 31 tons; *The Wasp*, Gun-boat, 41 tons. Bateaux, three in number; one thirty-two feet cutter; two

thirty-two feet gigs ; one whale boat ; one jolly boat, one nineteen feet gig, and a large quantity of sails, rigging and other marine stores.

In 1838 a detachment of the 34th under Lieut. Hutton, and of incorporated militia under Colonel Davis were stationed here. In 1840, incorporated militia under Lieut. Thompson. In 1843, 93rd Highlanders under Lieut. Hay. 1844, 84th Regiment under Lieut. West. 1846, Royal Canadian Rifles under Lieut. Black. 1850, Royal Canadian Rifles under Lieut. Fitzgerald. In 1851, Royal Canadian Rifles under Lieut. Moffat. In 1851, Enrolled Pensioners under Captain Hodgets.

The gun-boats since 1840 were the *Minos*, laid up ; the steamer, *Experiment*, Lieut. Boxer ; and the *Mohawk*, Lieut. Tyssen.

Amongst the visitors to Penetanguishene were Franklin, Lord Merveth, Lord Prudhoe, Sir Henry Hart and Lord Sydenham.

Step by step, however, the garrison was reduced until the ancient depot was finally extinguished, and in 1859 the Barracks were converted into a Public Reformatory.

The distinguished Canadian writer, Dr. Scadding, referring to Governor Simcoe's Road from Toronto says : " Penetanguishene indeed as a port no longer requires such an approach as this." " It is however, not improbable that " Penetanguishene itself will again acquire importance, when " hereafter properly connected with our Railway system, now " so surely advancing to the North Shore of Lake Huron ; " thence to push on to the North-West."

We now have that connection—may the venerable Doctor's words be prophetic !

PENETANGUISHENE IN 1880.

Though the name of Penetanguishene is old and historic, the present Village of Penetanguishene is very modern. In fact it cannot be said to date back much further than four or five years, to the time of the inception of the North Simcoe Railway. For since that time nearly all the buildings of any consequence that now exist in it, have been erected. Since the advent of the Railway in 1879, Penetanguishene has made a more rapid advance in proportion, than any other place in Ontario. This year there has been erected, or is still being erected, a glass factory, a brewery, Charles Beck & Co.'s saw mill, with a cutting capacity of ten million feet, and the Brentwood Mill Company's saw mill with a similar capacity. This latter Company is only just commencing building operations, and will be a great addition to the village. Amongst other manufacturies, Penetanguishene has a match factory, furniture factory, broom-handle factory and clothes-pin factory. A tannery, foundry, planing mill and three other saw mills, viz.: McGibbon's, Davidsin's and Copelands. Its position, now that it has connection with the Railway system of the continent, for manufacturing purposes is most excellent. Situated in the midst of a country abounding in pine and every description of hardwood, obtainable at a merely nominal figure. With unrivalled shipping facilities by water and rail, it bids fair to become a large manufacturing town. Certainly if it does as well in future years as it has this year, its progress will be steady and rapid.

The Provincial Reformatory, situated at the outskirts of the village, is an Institution of great importance and public interest. Its situation is peculiarly lovely, and nature at any rate uses her best efforts to make the life of the youths confined there, a happy one. There are now over two hundred boys in the Reformatory and large additions are being made to the building. There is very little of the prison in the working of the Institution, it partaking more of the nature of a large public school, so that there is no repulsive ideas connected with the having such a place in close proximity to our town, but rather a feeling that we have one of the most interesting institutions in the Province in our midst. No person should leave Penetanguishene without visiting the Reformatory.

The magnificent Island scenery which commences at the mouth of our harbor, and stretches in an unbroken chain for some hundred miles Northward, will make this place *the* summer resort of the North. Anything more beautiful and grand than this glorious Archipelago cannot be conceived, with its thirty thousand islands, with all their varied forms : barren, wooded, sandy, rocky, wind swept and storm polished islands of every conceivable shape and form and size. Here there is no danger of nature becoming hackneyed or monotonous. And the fishing and shooting is in keeping with the scenery—equally good and varied. The whole chain is a summer Paradise, on which all the beauties of the St. Lawrence and Muskoka scenery are combined, with the cooling breezes of Lake Huron.

Impressed with the fact that all the place needed to make it a popular resort for summer tourists was a good hotel, our enterprising citizen, Mr. Copeland, erected the fine new hotel, "The Georgian Bay House," which was finally completed this season. A glance over the register of guests will show how well his efforts have been appreciated, and how widely the reputation of the Georgian Bay Hotel has spread. It has now the reputation of being one of the most comfortable and desirable summer resorts in Canada, combined with a moderateness in its charges that is a pleasing change from the generality of summer houses.